

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising the steps of:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network,  
5 and storing keywords selected by the user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to  
10 the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when there has been a request for retrieving the keywords from a second user different from the first user through  
15 the network, and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a retrieved result of the keywords and advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the  
20 network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

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2. The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the points gained by the users are exchanged for a product or a service.

5 3. The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the points consist of user points that are generated when the other users have retrieved the user-obtained keywords and advertiser points that are generated when the other users have referred to the  
10 advertisement.

4. The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the selection of the keywords is free of charge, and the users can select the free keywords at the time of  
15 making a contract on the utilization of a network service.

5. The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the selection of the keywords is charged, and purchase prices of the charged keywords are determined based  
20 on a past record of retrieval of the keywords by the other users.

6. The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the users include charged  
25 keywords and free keywords, and charged keyword of which

retrieval record by the other users is low are converted to free keywords, and free keywords of which retrieval record by the other users is high are converted to charged keywords.

5     7.     The method of providing points according to the claim  
1, wherein the keywords selected by the advertisers include  
charged keywords and free keywords, and the advertisers can  
select the free keywords only after the advertisers have  
selected the charged keywords.

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8.     The method of providing points according to the claim  
1, wherein the users who have registered the keywords can  
select a display on the Web or a transmission by e-mail as  
a method of presenting the advertisement to the other users.

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9.     A method of providing points comprising the steps of:  
obtaining keywords that a user can obtain from a server  
through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at  
a user's terminal;

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transmitting keywords that the user has selected from  
the user's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval by other user together  
with advertisement of advertisers corresponding to the  
keywords registered in the server to the other user, when  
25 an another user different from the above user has retrieved

the keywords through the network; and

giving points to the user who has obtained the keywords,  
when the other user has referred to the advertisement.

- 5 10. A method of providing points comprising the steps of:  
obtaining keywords that an advertiser can obtain from  
a server through a network, and displaying the obtained  
keywords at advertiser's terminal;

transmitting keywords that the advertiser has selected  
10 from the advertiser's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval of keywords by user  
together with advertisement of the advertiser to the user,  
when the user has retrieved the keywords; and

giving points to an another user who has obtained the  
15 keywords stored in the server, when the user who has retrieved  
the keywords have referred to the advertisement.

11. A method of providing points based on a retrieval of  
keywords, the method comprising the steps of:

20 displaying retrieved results of keywords together with  
advertisement of advertiser corresponding to the keywords  
at user's terminal, when the user has retrieved the keywords  
from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to an another user who has selected the  
25 keywords, when the keyword-retrieved user has referred to

the displayed advertisement.

12. An apparatus for providing points, said apparatus comprising:

5 a user-selected keyword storing unit which stores keywords that a user has selected through a network, relating to the user;

an advertiser-selected keyword storing unit which stores keywords that an advertiser has selected through the  
10 network, relating to the advertiser;

an advertiser-retrieving unit which retrieves an advertiser corresponding to keywords by referring to an advertiser-by-keyword management table, when an another user different from the user who has retrieved through the  
15 network the keywords that have been registered in both a user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table;

a transmitting unit which transmits the retrieved results together with advertisement of the advertiser to  
20 the another user;

a user retrieving unit which retrieves the user corresponding to the keywords by referring to the user-by-keyword management table, when the another user has referred to the advertisement;

25 point allocating unit which gives points to the user

who has obtained the keyword; and

point registering unit which registers the points by relating the points to the user.

- 5 13. A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising the steps of:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network,  
10 and storing keywords selected by the user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to  
15 the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when there has been a request for retrieving the keywords from a second user different from the first user through  
20 the network, and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a retrieved result of the keywords and advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the  
25 network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

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14. A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points, the method comprising the steps of:

10 obtaining keywords that a user can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at a user's terminal;

transmitting keywords that the user has selected from the user's terminal to the server;

15 presenting results of retrieval by other user together with advertisement of advertisers corresponding to the keywords registered in the server to the other user, when an another user different from the above user has retrieved the keywords through the network; and

20 giving points to the user who has obtained the keywords, when the other user has referred to the advertisement.

15. A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to  
25 perform a method of providing points, the method comprising

the steps of:

obtaining keywords that an advertiser can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at advertiser's terminal;

5       transmitting keywords that the advertiser has selected from the advertiser's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval of keywords by user together with advertisement of the advertiser to the user, when the user has retrieved the keywords; and

10       giving points to an another user who has obtained the keywords stored in the server, when the user who has retrieved the keywords have referred to the advertisement.

16.    A computer readable medium for storing instructions,  
15    which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising the steps of:

displaying retrieved results of keywords together with advertisement of advertiser corresponding to the keywords  
20    at user's terminal, when the user has retrieved the keywords from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to an another user who has selected the keywords, when the keyword-retrieved user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

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together with advertisement of the advertiser to the user,  
when the user has retrieved the keywords; and

giving points to an another user who has obtained the  
keywords stored in the server, when the user who has retrieved  
5 the keywords have referred to the advertisement.

20. A computer program for causing the computer to perform  
a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords,  
the method comprising the steps of:

10 displaying retrieved results of keywords together with  
advertisement of advertiser corresponding to the keywords  
at user's terminal, when the user has retrieved the keywords  
from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to an another user who has selected the  
15 keywords, when the keyword-retrieved user has referred to  
the displayed advertisement.